

MINUTES OF THE  
MAG 9-1-1 OVERSIGHT TEAM MEETING

February 28, 2008  
MAG Office Building, Palo Verde Room  
Phoenix, Arizona

MEMBERS ATTENDING

Harry Beck, Mesa Fire Department, Chair	Helen Gandara-Zavala, Scottsdale Police Department
* Mark Burdick, Glendale Fire Department	Brenda Buren, Tempe Police Department
Jesse Locksa for Ray Churay, Maricopa County Sheriff's Office	# Lawrence Rodriguez, Tolleson Police Department
Mike Fusco, Emergency Management, Peoria	
Steve Kreis, Phoenix Fire Department	
* Robert Demlong, Phoenix Police Department	

\* Those members neither present nor represented by proxy.

# Attended by telephone conference call.

+ Attended by videoconference call.

OTHERS PRESENT

Valerie Day, MAG	Tom Melton, Scottsdale
Mike Benjamin, MR 9-1-1	Nathan Pryor, MAG
Mary Franklin, MR 9-1-1	Vicki Scott, Peoria
Liz Graeber, MR 9-1-1 Administrator	Brent Stoddard, Mesa
David Jones, Scottsdale	

1. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Harry Beck, Chief, Mesa Fire Department, at 1:35 p.m.

2. Call to the Audience

An opportunity is provided to the public to address the 9-1-1 Oversight Team on items that are not on the agenda that are within the jurisdiction of MAG, or non-action agenda items that are on the agenda for discussion or information only. Citizens will be requested not to exceed a three minute time period for their comments. A total of 15 minutes will be provided for the Call to the Audience agenda item, unless the Oversight Team requests an exception to this limit. Opportunities for comment on items posted for action are provided at the time the item is heard. Chairman Beck noted that no public comment cards had been turned in.

3. Approval of the September 11, 2007 Meeting Minutes

Upon a motion by Chief Kreis and a second by Ms. Gandara-Zavala, the minutes of the September 11, 2007 meeting were approved.

4. CENS Informational Video

Nathan Pryor, MAG Senior Policy Planner, updated members on the video being produced that will inform the public of the benefits of the Community Emergency Notification System (CENS) program by showing its success stories. He stated that the MAG Communications Division has been working on developing the video, which was requested at the last Oversight Team meeting. Mr. Pryor stated that Chief Harms from the City of Phoenix will be interviewed on March 6th, and MAG is arranging interviews in the cities of Glendale and Mesa. It was noted that staff would find out the timeline for completion of the video and would report back to the committee. Chair Beck commented that Mr. Pryor had been a huge help to the 9-1-1 efforts in the short time since joining MAG staff.

5. Update on Funding Issues for the MAG 9-1-1 System

Liz Graeber, Maricopa Region 9-1-1 Administrator, reported on two funding issues facing the 9-1-1 system. She stated that the first issue is the decrease in the administrative amount that resulted from the decrease in the monthly rate per phone line over the past three years (37 cents in FY 2006, 28 cents in FY 2007, and 20 cents in FY 2008). She handed out copies of House Bill (HB) 2381, sponsored by Representative Jerry Weiers. Ms. Graeber stated that HB 2381 would increase the amount for administrative costs from three percent to five percent. She advised that this will allow the MAG 9-1-1 Office to retain the staff required for continuous updating of wireless mapping. Ms. Graeber commented that this is a temporary fix, because this eats into the fund which is already getting smaller because of the decrease in the monthly excise tax. Ms. Graeber noted that HB 2381 had passed unanimously through the House Natural Resources and Public Safety Committee, and it then goes to Rules, the House and the Senate.

Chairman Beck noted that he had attended the session, and the Legislators asked a lot of questions about past funding issues and the status of the fund. He noted that members might receive some questions from their intergovernmental representatives, and added that there might be a possibility that they might need to testify to get this bill passed.

Ms. Graeber stated that the second issue is the exhaustion of the fund that pays for the region's Community Emergency Notification System (CENS). She said that the fund is projected to be depleted in March 2008, and the State 9-1-1 Office has agreed to pay the program's costs through June 2008. Beyond that, there is no funding. Ms. Graeber stated that the MAG 9-1-1 Office has applied for grants through Homeland Security and Indian gaming, and has approached the state to carry the program through, but nothing has been secured beyond the end of this fiscal year.

Mr. Pryor reported that at its meeting the previous night, the Regional Council discussed 9-1-1 and CENS. He stated that the Council took action to support legislation to increase the percentage allowed for administrative costs and to explore with the Legislature increasing the administrative cost from three to eight percent and to encourage the Legislature to provide a permanent funding source to continue the Community Emergency Notification System. Mr. Pryor noted that the emphasis of the action was "to explore" increasing the administrative percentage, because they did not want to inadvertently harm HB 2381.

Brent Stoddard, Intergovernmental Representative from the City of Mesa, expressed concern that changing the language in the bill could have a negative impact on its passage.

Chair Beck asked if they would want the Oversight Team to reinforce the Regional Council action. Mr. Stoddard replied that the Oversight Team could take action to support the Regional Council action, but there should be no expectation to pursue an increase in the percentage.

Chief Kreis stated that action by the Oversight Team to support the Regional Council's position would put them in a stronger position; if action is not taken, it looks like conflicting positions.

Ms. Gandara-Zavala moved to support the Regional Council efforts in exploring funding options for the region's 9-1-1 and CENS systems. Mr. Fusco seconded, and the motion carried unanimously.

Chair Beck extended his thanks to the Intergovernmental Representatives for their assistance to 9-1-1. He requested that staff provide to the Oversight Team the powerpoint presentation given at the Regional Council meeting, and noted that it contained some good data that could be used as talking points.

6. Request for Proposals to Provide Service for the Community Emergency Notification System

Ms. Graeber stated that Qwest and Intrado have notified the Maricopa Region 9-1-1 Office that after July 1, 2008, they will no longer provide their Emergency Preparedness Network which is the platform used for CENS. Ms. Graeber noted that a working group developed a request for proposals to find a replacement emergency notification platform. She stated that comments received from the Oversight Team and the working group will be incorporated into the request for proposals. Ms. Graeber indicated that the request for proposals will be released using the City of Phoenix procurement process and with the understanding that permanent funding has not been secured. Ms. Graeber commented that the 9-1-1 Office is getting preparations in place so when new funding is secured, they can get a new system in place as quickly as possible.

Mr. Fusco moved to recommend moving forward with the scope of work and the development of the request for proposals, pending funding to support CENS. Chief Kreis seconded, and the motion carried unanimously.

7. Maintenance of the 9-1-1 Equipment

Mike Benjamin from the 9-1-1 Office provided an update on maintenance of the 9-1-1 equipment. He said that staffing had stabilized over the past few months. Mr. Benjamin reported on the recent cutover at Mesa Police Communications and a few upcoming projects.

Chair Beck extended his appreciation to Mr. Benjamin's staff because a lot of work went into the upgrade at Mesa. He noted that Phoenix Police Department picked up the calls during the short transition. Chair Beck stated that the backup system worked well and to his knowledge, not one call was missed.

Ms. Graeber added her thanks to staff at the City of Mesa, whose organizational skills made the transition easy.

8. Topic Suggestions

Ms. Graeber introduced the new Chair of the PSAP Managers Group, Vicki Scott, Peoria.

Chair Beck stated that among the items for the next agenda would be an update on legislation. He stated that the approved MAG 9-1-1 Five Year Plan would be helpful as the legislative session proceeds in answering questions in a consistent manner and having a mutual basis of understanding and direction for the 9-1-1 system. Chair Beck also noted that the education component needs to be intensified. He stated that a couple of years ago, \$15 million was taken from the 9-1-1 fund by the Legislature and never replaced, and the monthly excise tax is back to 20 cents, to the rate it was 10 years ago. Chair Beck advised that the region is looking at explosive growth with a flat and low amount of revenue to keep the 9-1-1 system going. He encouraged obtaining support and agreement by the Intergovernmental Representatives, realizing that cities have individual issues and are competitors.

Chief Kreis suggested discussion of a backup plan in the event HB 2381 failed. Chair Beck noted that the state could provide an update on the status of the 9-1-1 fund and their plan if revenue fell or is flat. He noted that the state does not have a five year plan, they go from year to year. Chair Beck said that the state feels it is not their role to initiate any change in the revenue structure. Typically, the region's intergovernmental representatives have approached legislators to bring forward bills.

Ms. Gandara-Zavala asked for clarification that the only alternative for funding CENS was grant money. Chair Beck replied that was the only source so far. Ms. Gandara-Zavala asked the amount needed to fund CENS. Ms. Graeber stated that \$600,000 per year is needed, for operations and staff.

Chair Beck stated that at the last meeting, the Oversight Team discussed at length the need for a more comprehensive approach to 9-1-1 and CENS funding. He said that he and Chief Kreis had met with MAG's Executive Director, Dennis Smith, and discussed strategic approaches. Chair Beck stated that the Oversight Team also discussed gaining support by producing a video and developing a campaign on the CENS program. Chair Beck stated that not many members of the public know about the CENS program and would be unaware if it went away. However, if they needed it, then there would be a big deal about what happened to it. Chair Beck stated that at the next meeting, the committee could discuss a longer term strategic plan for how this region could generate more revenue for 9-1-1.

It was agreed that with the intense rate of activity, the Oversight Team would meet more frequently in the coming months.

Mr. Benjamin commented on the potential loss of the wireless mapping positions. He said that every week, new cell sites and sectors are added. The 9-1-1 Office receives calls from cell phone companies seeking their advice on how to route and deliver calls to the right PSAP. Mr. Benjamin commented that the work of those who do the wireless mapping cannot be redistributed to other staff—it is highly specialized knowledge. He advised that if these positions are gone, it will leave a large void as to what the 9-1-1 Office can provide when the requests from the cell phone companies come in.

Vicki Scott stated that Peoria had two lives saved because of wireless mapping. She reported that one caller, lost in the desert, gave the address of what he thought was his location; however, it was not

even close to the actual location where he was found. Ms. Scott stated that Phase II allowed the rescuers to find him and it allows public safety personnel to do their jobs.

Chair Beck requested that an impact statement be drafted to accompany the information on HB 2381. Chair Beck stated that it was also good to include stories where Phase I and Phase II worked. He commented that it is difficult to understand unless it is put in the context of how it is important, what these positions do and why the funding is going away.

The Oversight Team agreed that success stories could be solicited from their PSAPs and transmitted to Ms. Graeber.

Chair Beck stated that MAG has the ability to tap into the media with these stories. CENS and the 9-1-1 systems are 90 percent invisible until something does not go well. Chair Beck stated that the effort requires the support from the cities; MAG is a pass-through agency and it is difficult for them to take the lead when activity is at the local level. He added that MAG members need to convey the message better than in the past. Chair Beck stated that the community sections of *The Arizona Republic* are good resources for informing the public about the service they receive. He stated that the story of the cost of doing 9-1-1 has not been told well.

Tom Melton, Scottsdale PSAP, stated that the upcoming National Telecommunications Week is a good opportunity for human interest stories. It would be natural to show how 9-1-1 is saving lives. Chair Beck commented that this is a good fit because they are looking for those types of stories.

Ms. Gandara-Zavala, Ms. Scott, and Mr. Pryor volunteered to speak with their agencies' PIOs on guidance and strategies.

Chair Beck commented on how strong should be: Good news stories, or bad consequences if nothing is done. Chair Beck directed that a report would be on the next Oversight Team agenda.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 2:15 p.m.